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ABSTRACT

A proposed career education program in the Clark County, Nevada, school district is described, based on the following components: career awareness at the elementary school level; greater awareness and investigative and exploratory experiences at the intermediate level; continued exploratory experiences, curriculum for a purpose, and correlated work experiences at the secondary level; and, finally, career directional counseling at departure from high school. In Clark County schools, the two-and-one-half-year program development will provide: awareness of the world of work through the elementary level social science curriculum (curriculum guides are being prepared), greater understanding of various occupations through specially prepared films for sixth and seventh grades, and self-awareness and identification with various careers for eighth grade students through a series of eight special two-day sessions of films and classroom activities. Other plans include profile counseling for intermediate and high school students to aid decision making, work experience correlated with course work for high school, and career directional counseling for students leaving school. A 27-member career education advisory committee has been established for the county. (MDW)

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"GETTING CAREER EDUCATION ON!"

By Verl L. Frehner, Ed.D.

The field of education seems to be the domain of every individual--and well should it be. Practically every person has experienced a number of years in an educational system and can therefore speak first-hand about the degree of value the experience was to him.

It is understandable, then, that those who have passed through an educational system have the advantage of the experience, as well as time and maturation, which allows them to see things in a broader perspective.

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It could well be that it is this perspective which makes Career Education so attractive to educators and laymen alike. For example, in numerous individual meetings with business, industry, education, labor, and other organizational leaders in the schools and community, the concept of Career Education was received with sincere interest and enthusiasm. As a result of this interest, certain individuals indicated their disappointment that their children were older now and had not had the benefit of a Career Education approach to education. On the other hand, many individuals were openly pleased that their own "younger" children may still have time to benefit from the efforts being made in this school district in "Getting Career Education On."

Career Education, handled correctly, does not diminish the value or need of the established role of education. On the contrary, it will increase the value and need of education because what Career Education does, or should do, is to make education more meaningful by embellishing learning with

(Continued on page 2)

"GETTING CAREER EDUCATION ON!"

(Continued from front page)

purpose; that is, tentative Career Family choices provide the basis for immediate and future goals, goals have requirements which must be met if one is to accomplish them, and education selected for the purpose of accomplishing a goal provides learning for a purpose. The following basic components of a Career Education Program are organized with this in mind.

1. Career Awareness at the Elementary School Level--Students on the elementary level are systematically exposed to, and experience, those types of educational experiences that make them aware of the world of work, our society, and of themselves in relation to the home, the school, the community, and the work place.

2. Greater Awareness, Investigative and Exploratory Experiences at the Intermediate School Level--Career Education provides students at the intermediate level with an additional awareness of self. They begin to have information made available to them concerning the skills, knowledges, and abilities that they possess at this time in their life. They are also encouraged to identify their tentative educational and occupational aspirations. In order to help students arrive at these tentative decisions they are provided with investigative and exploratory experiences related to the various possible career families they have identified as being of interest to them. The accumulation and analysis of this information by students about themselves help them make additional decisions affecting their then, and future, course selection and activities.

3. Continued Exploratory Experiences, Curriculum for a Purpose, and Correlated Work Experiences at the Secondary High School Level--An in-depth exploration of a number of occupations within a career cluster (family) will provide the student with greater insights and data upon which to make decisions concerning his career goals. Students should also have the opportunity of organizing their course offerings in ways that will benefit them as they strive to accomplish their career goals. The curriculum becomes meaningful as relationships are identified between what is being offered in course offerings and real requirements of an occupation, or career family. The flexibility inherent in curriculum can then be utilized by teacher and student and curriculum can "bend" in the direction identified by student goals.

   In conjunction with this "curriculum for a purpose" approach, opportunities are provided for students to pursue their career goals out in the real world of work. Work experiences related to tentative, or definite career cluster selections provide the student the opportunity to obtain skills, attitudes, knowledges, and abilities in his/her career selection. As a result, a meaningful relationship is created for a student between his curriculum and career goals.

4. Career Directional Counseling Upon Departure from High School--At the time of departure of students from high school, the school provides

(Continued on page 3)

"GETTING CAREER EDUCATION ON!"

(Continued from page 2)

students with one additional help in their effort to integrate into society, that of Directional Counseling. Post-high school "Directional Counseling" is designed to help the student find his own direction based upon his career preparation. Should the student feel confident in the skills he has acquired, sufficient guidance is given for him to understand the options open to him. Likewise, a person who desires or recognizes a need for additional schooling is given counseling concerning the options available to him in obtaining education and/or training in his career area.

Career Education tends to deal with the realistic issues of education such as the preparation for assuming a productive role in society by helping students create a foundation of skills, attitudes, knowledges, etc., which support their individual goals. This provides the student a better chance to expend his energies doing things he prefers to do rather than leaving important life decisions entirely to chance. Career Education, then, is for the benefit of students as they prepare themselves for life.

The human nature of an individual seems to demand that he have a direction, a goal, an aspiration, a hope, or other internal commitment which gives purpose to life. Our society has, to an extent, created conditions where students are restricted from participating in it and have allowed them to exit from our educational systems ill-prepared, in too many instances, to deal with it.

Career Education sets the stage for additional experiences in learning which are interspersed with real life. It allows a student to identify and prepare for a segment of our complex society and helps a student grow as a member of a society, instead of restricting him from participating in it.

As evidenced by our current energy crisis, our society can ill afford to waste energy or resources, whether it be natural or human. More important than the value of Career Education to society is its value to the individual student and the parents who have a desire to see their children suceed.

The interest expressed by individuals knowledgeable of the Career Education thrust in education is understandable then when the benefit to students is understood. As a result of this interest, Career Education has begun to emerge in various schools in the Clark County School District through the efforts of interested administrators and teachers. Through the means of a grant of Federal funds, an effort is currently underway to help coordinate and solidify additional plans which will give added impetus to the Career Education thrust.

In order to do this a number of things are being designed and will be accomplished during the next two and one half years of program development.

1. Elementary students will acquire "awareness" of the world of work through their exposure to Social Science Curriculum. Curriculum Guides

(Concluded on page 4)

"GETTING CAREER EDUCATION ON!"

(Conclusion)

are now being prepared for Kindergarten through sixth grade which have "Career Awareness" infused in all "strands" of the guide.

2. Sixth and seventh grade students will have an opportunity to obtain an even greater understanding of the world of work through a series of career films which have been developed by camera crews from Channel 10 television. These films are designed to expose a number of occupations to students in order that they may perceive more accurately the range of occupations available to them and to obtain a "feel" for the type of work found in specific jobs. Eighth grade students will have included in their curriculum a series of 8 two-day sessions of especially prepared films and classroom activities. This will help them to understand themselves and identify with various careers. They will also do preplanning for high school course work based upon their tentative career family selections.

3. The Intermediate and High School students will have available a "Profile Counseling" system designed to allow students to realistically chart their "profile" by comparing their accomplishments, skills and abilities, and tentative educational and occupational goals. More realistic and meaningful decisions are made by students when data about themselves are available.

4. High School students will be able to benefit from their tentative or definite career selections while still in high school. The student's course work can be directed toward satisfying identified career requirements. Work experiences arranged through a school district work experience coordinating unit can then be engaged in and correlated with the student's career goals and school course work in order to provide the student an even greater preparation for a particular career selection.

5. Career directional counseling for students leaving high school will be available in order that students be able to utilize those skills, knowledges, attitudes, and abilities developed during their high school experiences either in work situations or in extended education and/or preparation.

A career education advisory committee of 27 persons has been established in order to help in the development of career education in Clark County. It is composed of representatives from the home, the community, the school, and the work place. These committee members are vitally interested in the potential career education has for our youth, and as a result, their participation will insure the development of a more meaningful career education program.

"The field of education seems to be the domain of every individual--and well should it be." For we all have a personal interest in those things which have the potential of influencing our lives for the better whether this benefit is derived individually or collectively. With the interest evident in educators and lay public alike, the future of career education looks promising. The combined efforts of the educational system, the community, and the funded career education program are being organized in order to help the schools to continue in their efforts to benefit students by helping the schools in "getting career education on."